

# JOB CORPS

## PARTNERSHIPS THAT WORK

### Dallas Region

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## Job Corps' Home Builders Institute Students Give Sweat to Red Cross

The American Red Cross is synonymous with CPR classes and being the first to provide aid during a disaster, but occasionally even the Red Cross needs a helping hand. The Red Cross is in the process of relocating from their office on East College to their new building on South Main. Before they could occupy the building, it needed a little work; there were not enough electrical outlets, it needed new paint, and the building had never been set up with computer networks in mind. The board of directors for the Red Cross got in contact with Mike Kissell and Rufe Dunnahoo, who are instructors for the Home Builders Institute at Roswell Job Corps Center, and asked if their students would like to take on the challenge.

Mike Kissell's electrical students were asked to change light fixtures, add new power outlets, and add new computer and telephone drops. This was a great opportunity for the

students to obtain actual on-the-job training. This kind of work gives the students a chance to help out the community and shows the people of Roswell what the students are learning at the Roswell Job Corps Center. The electrical students that participated were: Chris Ballew, Max Douglas, Alicia Gallardo, Alfredo Hidalgo, Gerardo Jimenez, Adam Stewart, Ruben Terrazas, and Jose Urbina.

Rufe Dunnahoo's painting class at Roswell Job Corps showed their proficiency in their craft by assisting the Red Cross in prepping and painting their new offices. We were happy to help out, and the painters were very excited to go to the job site and show off their skills. We appreciate the Red Cross for asking us to assist in the remodeling of their new location. The painting students that participated were: David Adkins, Joseph Gonzalez, Michael Prince, Jose Romero, Amanda DeJolie, Jerome Richmond, Vernon

Jennings, Charlie Adkins, Christina Enrique, Rachell Freeman, Adrianna Velasques, Ryan Spannkebel, Lonnie Hinnman, and Nathan Gentry.

Red Cross Executive Director, Dara Dana, was excited about the students and their work on the new offices. "The students were very excited to be doing the work and were having a lot of fun; it is important that they really seem to enjoy what they do." For the past week, the 22 students and their instructors labored tirelessly to complete the job in a timely manner, but they always took the time to show pride in their work. Even though this project was done gratis for the Red Cross, there was no slacking in the efforts of quality and craftsmanship. It is a testimony to the teachers, staff, and students at Job Corps that every time a person walks into the Red Cross offices they will know the standards that Job Corps students have set for themselves.

## In Memory of Michael Drusky – Ouachita Job Corps Center Director



**Michael D. Drusky**  
February 23, 1952 - April 8, 2003

Michael D. Drusky was born on February 23, 1952, in California. His spirit left his earthly body on April 8, 2003, after a fierce battle with cancer. Michael Drusky, a Nez Perce Native American, met and married his wife Janet on the Nez Perce Indian Reservation in Idaho. Michael left behind his loving wife, Janet, his mother Sally Glidden, his father,

Ray Drusky, his brothers David and Ernie, sister Patti, and scores of friends all across the country. He touched so many lives with his contagious enthusiasm and positive character, leaving with us a legacy of courage and determination to persevere in even the most challenging situations. Michael Drusky's life was devoted to the youth of America; he had

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Employment and  
Training Administration

# JOB CORPS News

## Of Education, Information, Knowledge, and the Fire

By Dean Christopher



Educating students is never easy. Even students from financially, physically, and emotionally secure backgrounds present challenges for their schools. The situation is obviously aggravated

when it comes to students whose early environment features economic struggle, discrimination, physical or mental abuse (or both), underachievement, and widespread hopelessness.

All schools (even private schools) have some students who have troubles – or who are trouble. What complicates the Job Corps mission is that, by definition, most of our students are from troubled backgrounds.

One writer reminds us that poor kids are not just “rich kids with less money.” They are children of a different culture. We might almost view them as visitors from an overlapping universe. In our universe, they see happiness and privilege and success – but see no place for themselves at the table. They see the deck stacked against them in our “happy” universe – and they don’t even get a chance to cut the cards. This breeds anxiety, frustration, self-doubt, and anger. “At-risk” kids come to Job Corps with mixed toughness and fragility. Wary, hopeful, uncertain; they have minimal self-esteem, negative attitudes, and low expectations for the future. And, based on their lives to date, that’s understandable. Life is not easy for under-educated, unempowered, unskilled people, and it’s only getting worse. Our mission is to teach them the way to self-esteem, to show that their lives can be

positive – and thereby realistically raise their expectations.

But the obstacles are really nasty. One study, from a year when many readers of this page were just entering socially motivated work, stated that:

- Some 30 percent of youth in school now (1987) will drop out before graduating
- There is no clear definition or description of who these youth are
- There is every indication that their numbers will increase in coming years
- Society will bear profound economic costs for failing to educate these young people

Sadly, this prediction proved accurate. From public education we “inherit” kids who dropped out (permanently, or so they think); “stopped out” (to take care of other life issues, but hope to return); or were “pushed out” (due to their ongoing underachievement, schools didn’t “waste time” on them, and tacitly encouraged their leaving). Educators generally know what makes schools work effectively. But the question remains: can the same techniques, processes, and procedures that work in “effective” schools also work for at-risk youth?

We might ironically define “effective” schools as those which pump kids full of information, and teach them to pass tests on that information so they can advance to the next level, where another school can pump in more information, teach them to pass that level’s tests ... and so on. This is not to knock “effective” schools, but to underscore the additional social and emotional responsibility shouldered by Job Corps educators.

Information is essential, desirable, and useful. But information alone is not knowledge. Information by itself isn’t – or in my view should not be – the main point of a Job Corps education anyway. Information alone (not even in the form of vocational skills!) won’t move students “up the ladder,” or guarantee happy, successful lives. It’s the contextual knowledge that students acquire while getting the information that matters. Like how information applies to the real world. Like how to continue learning in new, diverse settings. Like how to get up off the canvas after being knocked down. Like how to see themselves as proof that comebacks really happen. Like learning that success is not some superficial coating of “smartness.” Success can come only from inside the successer. To learn that is to be truly motivated.

The greatest knowledge students can get is self-knowledge. Our job is to guide them to that knowledge, which will grow along with their self-esteem as students realize that we really want them to succeed. For many of those kids, this may well be the first personal, individualized reinforcement of their lives.

This is a huge responsibility, because it opens up emotional and mental channels that were previously closed. It’s our big chance to light a fire in some young person’s soul. We must be careful not to blow that chance, because to blow it is to blow out a fire that can motivate that student to a life of achievement and happiness.

Scary, isn’t it? We usually get only one chance to give students a second chance. If we can just remember that every day, it will keep our own fires burning.

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Continued from page 1 – In Memory of Michael Drusky – Ouachita Job Corps Center Director

worked for Job Corps since March 1985. His career started in Oregon at the Wolf Creek Center, where he remained until 1988; from 1989 to 1991, he was at Timber Lake in Oregon, then to Curlew in Washington from 1991 to 1993, Trapper Creek in Montana from 1993 until 1998, Pine Knot Job Corps in

Kentucky from 1998 through 2002, and finally, he came to Ouachita Job Corps in Royal, Arkansas, as Center Director in January 2002. We will mourn the loss of his physical presence, but his spirit will remain with us forever.

Services were held Saturday evening, April 12, at 8 p.m. at the Bible Doctrine Church of

Little Rock, 9621 Tall Timber Blvd. in Little Rock, Arkansas. The family requested donations to the “Michael D. Drusky Scholarship Fund”, in care of Dave Drusky, 1020 E. Capitol, Little Rock, AR, 72202, in lieu of flowers. This fund was established at Bank of America.

# JOB CORPS News

## Letters to the Editor

### Dear Editor:

I have been on center for a little over a year and feel like I have learned a lot about Job Corps. There are, however, some activities on center that staff has little involvement in such as recreation or community involvement. I am really interested in becoming involved, but most of the staff feels this isn't really important. Why is that? – Running on Empty

**Remember to send in those letters!**

### Dear Empty:

I commend you for wanting to become involved in center activities. Regardless of the activity, it is important that center staff realizes that ALL activity is important – and there is a purpose for the activity. Take recreation for instance. Recreation promotes team building, competition, socializing, and exercising to name a few. But more importantly, it gives both students and staff a feeling of belonging. Recreation is a common denominator and should be encouraged. It is

my experience that the most satisfied students on center are those who participate regularly in recreational activities. Community involvement is critical to the center. I urge you to talk to your Vocational Supervisor and Business and Community Liaison and offer your services ASAP. I am certain that they will be more than happy to sign you up for volunteer work. The community will appreciate it, the center will appreciate it, and the students will appreciate it.

## Ask Arla



*Dear Arla,*

How quickly do corrections post to the distributed CDSS Directory?  
*T.S.. – Oklahoma*

*Dear T.S.,*

Corrections to the directory are normally posted to the next issue, unless they are received after the submittal deadline. In those cases, the corrections will not appear until the following directory. Hope this clears things up.

*Dear Arla,*

We currently receive the Regional Newsletter, but I am wondering how we can get more copies. Do you know who I need to contact?

*P.J. - Texas*

*Dear P.J.,*

Additional copies can be obtained from me through the contact information below. You can also contact me if you need to add yourself or anyone else to the current mailing list. While on this subject, if you have recently

moved offices – please let me know so that I can make sure you continue to receive the newsletter at your new location.

All articles, information, Letters to the Editor, Ask Arla letters, and CDSS Directory changes for the July newsletter are due by **Wednesday, June 25, 2003** to:

**Arla de Hoyos**  
922 S. Alamo  
San Antonio, TX 78205  
210.226.2827 phone  
210.226.6827 fax  
arla@cuttingedgesa.com

## Center Tidbits

### David L. Carrasco

Vocational training instructors have an incentive program that has them competing against each other. Each month, the instructor who has completed the highest number of students and placed them in job training receives a \$50 incentive award. According to Facilities Maintenance Instructor, Annesley Whepdale, "It isn't about the award, but the feeling you get when a student completes the vocation and is gainfully employed. That is the best reward, because that is why we are

here and what the Job Corps program is all about."

Center Director, Mary S. Young, has announced two major appointments – Juan Lechuga to the position of Director of Vocational Training and Francisco Sanchez as Counseling Manager/Career Development Supervisor. Lechuga, who has been with the center for 17 years, had previously held the position of Counseling/Career Development Supervisor. He also served as Career Guidance Counselor and the Center's Equal

Opportunity Officer. Sanchez, who has been with Job Corps for five years, previously served as Transition Coordinator. Lechuga will oversee the eight vocations offered at the center and replaces 32-year veteran employee Lou Marzitelli, who has assumed the part-time position of Program Development Officer. One of the goals of the new Vocational Training Director is to involve Vocational Training instructors in job placement and to work with Sanchez and his staff to create a "team concept" with the instructor,

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counselor, and career advisor. Sanchez will be supervising the counselors, career advisors, and working closely with local businesses to secure employment for center graduates and establish Work-Based Learning sites.

## Gary

The Work-Based Learning staff has instituted a new outreach effort that brings local employers to the center to interact with students. These Employer Forums "...allow students to learn what employers are looking for and ask questions, as well as introduce business leaders to Gary and the Job Corps program," said WBL Specialist Rachel Esquivel.



Model/Actress Lisa Raye arrives at North Texas Job Corps.

## North Texas

Lisa Raye, Model/Actress, from movies like "Player's Club" and "Rhapsody," visited North Texas JCC in February. Raye, who took time from her busy schedule, spoke to the student body giving them motivation, inspiration, and encouragement. North Texas JCC Business Community Liaison, Sandra Herndon, prompted by student Ray Tillman, contacted Raye's assistant and is credited with facilitating the visit. The 100 or so students who were present during Raye's speech took with them her strong reminder that "hanging with the wrong crowd" can change your life and lead you down the wrong path in life. Self-respect was another important topic touched upon by Raye, as well as giving students a realistic interpretation of what happens in movie making. The speech was followed by a session of autograph signing and picture taking. "It is always wonderful when an individual can say something that can change the way a student thinks or the direction their life takes," said Herndon. We're sure students or staff will not soon forget this visit.

## Ouachita

On March 26, 2003, the State of Arkansas 84th General Assembly approved a House Resolution designating March 26, 2003, as Job Corps Recognition Day in Arkansas. This resolution was drafted by Representatives Lewellen, Cleveland L. Prater, R. Smith, and Senator T. Smith. Job Corps representatives from all three Arkansas Job Corps Centers attended the reading of the resolution and were recognized by a full round of applause by the entire body of the House. Ouachita Job Corps' Student Government Association Officers, Ebony Brown, Teo Alderson, and Special Fizer and Ouachita Job Corps' Business Community Liaison, Lora Davidson, were in attendance and had photographs made with Governor Huckabee, Senator T. Smith, and Representative Lewellen. This Resolution is a tribute to all of us who are dedicated to providing outstanding service and committed to the success of our students. This recognition and honor came to fruition as a result of the much-appreciated hard work of Little Rock Job Corps' Business Community Liaison, Willie Jones.



Ouachita Job Corps students (l-r) Steven Poin Dexter (Urban Forestry), Fabian Kelly (Brick and Stone Masonry), and Crystal Crow (Painting) rest during Columbia Shuttle recovery efforts.

February 17 through March 4, 2003, Ouachita Job Corps in Royal, Arkansas, sent the first of two crews to assist NASA in the Columbia Space Shuttle recovery. Cheryl Volpert led the crew of nine students who were the first to arrive in Hemphill, TX. Their initial task was to set up a camp that would accommodate 1,100 campers called to the site to take part in the recovery effort. Ms. Volpert recalled the impact that this experience had on her and her crew, "I think each student that went with me will keep this

experience with them always. We were helping the NASA family with the loss of their loved ones. We are a part of history. We cried along with the crews as they returned with pieces that they found. The work was hard and the hours were long, but the end result was worth every blister, aching muscle, and every headache. WE WERE THERE." Jeff Organ led the second crew of ten students from Ouachita Job Corps; they were on site in Corsicana, TX, from February 23 through March 4, 2003.

## Shreveport

The Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. presented an international day of service to the students at the Shreveport JCC on HIV/AIDS. The sorority dressed the center's gymnasium into their vibrant colors of red and white in preparation for their presentation. Early Saturday morning, students were packed into the gym for a program consisting of singing, dancing, and reading poetry. A play was also preformed that provided the audience with useful information on HIV/AIDS awareness. The speaker shared her personal life story of how she contracted HIV and is living with the infectious virus.

The Shreveport JCC has developed a working partnership with Grambling State University that began January 2003. There are a total of 11 students ranging from seniors to graduate students who have signed on to take part in the intern program with Shreveport JCC. The Sociology student interns will receive hands-on training, as each will have a caseload of ten students whom they will assist with career goals, personal needs, and mentoring. The partnership creates a win-win situation for both the university and Job Corps. Congratulations!

